

Recommendations... the beginning of solutions

The participants in the Youth Safety Summit developed 50 recommendations addressing the six pillars of youth safety.

"We are going to give this report back to the forums, schools and the Legislature."

—Superintendent Terry Bergeson
Youth Safety Summit Remarks
August 19, 1998

Prevention

1. **The Legislature** should adequately fund violence prevention efforts of community health and safety networks, state agencies, and collaborative programs.
2. **The Governor** should propose incentives, trust funds, public-private partnerships and collaborative ventures to increase resources available for prevention. For example, state funding could be structured to match volunteer hours as an incentive for volunteer participation.
3. **The Faith Community** should do more to build awareness and provide volunteers for prevention efforts.
4. **Public Entities** should improve coordination and collaboration in prevention efforts. Health agencies, law enforcement, schools, Department of Social and Health Services, and community health and safety networks should take the time to build a solid foundation and infrastructure, with clear consistent data collection, ongoing training, and an evaluation component.
5. **Everyone, including Youth**, should reduce and intervene in youth violence through community-based, data-validated programs such as the "asset building" model. Programs should identify risk factors in the community, and use the community health and safety network plans to develop protective factors. They should build on the knowledge of what has worked in other places.
6. **Parents and Schools** should redefine what parental involvement means. Schools should persistently recruit parents to be involved with their children's education.
7. **Youth** should be involved in the networks that make decisions about programs affecting youth. They should be recognized, empowered, and have a role in designing and implementing these programs.
8. **Community Organizations and Interested Citizens** should work cooperatively to identify and address the needs and assets in the community. Organizations, such as those concerned about diversity, mental health, domestic violence, and sexual abuse, should develop linkages to support schools.
9. **School Facilities** should be available beyond their traditional uses and hours to community organizations for recreation and social services.

"We will have to remember, every moment of every day, that our children learn more from what they see us doing, than from what we say."

—Governor Gary Locke
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10. Existing Prevention Programs that have proven to be effective in this state should be implemented consistently, and supported by administrators and decision-makers.

11. Social Services, Transportation, and Recreation Programs should be accessible to all residents, regardless of rural location, language and communication barriers, or other barriers.

12. Community Groups, Public and Private Entities, and the Community at Large should communicate standards like civility, respect, and zero tolerance of bullying. Parent groups, the faith community, senior citizens, men and women, all ethnic groups, the media and arts communities, youth, business, schools, and policymakers should support this effort. They should recognize positive actions of youth, help parents build their skills, consistently apply consequences, appreciate diversity, and engage in intergenerational communication and activities. Examples include early education for parents and their children; youth programs developed by youth; school-based prevention programs; after-school programs at community centers, YMCAs, and similar facilities; community forums; and opinion polls.

Parents and Families

1. School, Parent and Youth Partnerships should be encouraged. Parents should volunteer time during and after school to provide an "extended family." This should be a day-to-day program, with daily positive incentives in schools. Business should encourage volunteering by offering released time to participate at school. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction should encourage school districts to train volunteers to relate positively with children and youth. Teachers should train children to be "self-managers" with incentives in school. Teachers and principals should reinforce positive activities and achievements by attending awards ceremonies (such as Scout award nights), in addition to school-wide social and educational events. Teachers should give parents positive feedback about their children.

2. Parental Education should be available. Private and public employers should offer low cost parenting classes during lunch hours or before or after work hours. Prenatal health and service providers should refer prospective parents to endorsed parenting classes to develop child rearing skills throughout a child's life. Schools and communities should make a special effort to provide English as a Second Language to parents and students who need it.

3. Conflict Resolution should be available at school. Conflict resolution skills should be taught to all children and youth in all schools, using resources like Johnson and Johnson Conflict Management for Schools. Schools should target children at risk, such as children caught in problem behaviors. They should provide more focused resources, such as the Washington State School Directors' Association Community School Safety Resources and law enforcement intervention when necessary.

"We have much to learn from the youth in our state. Many of our problems, in my opinion, come from not respecting them as people—and respecting their voices."

—Superintendent Terry Bergeson
Youth Safety Summit Remarks
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"And we can actively support our teachers and principals by backing them up when they insist on high standards of student discipline as well as high standards for academic

4. Family Support Services should improve access to their programs. The school system should provide a central translation and interpreter clearinghouse for school materials. Agencies serving families should provide and maintain transportation, childcare, clothing, and other services such as family advocates, family specialists, and school to family outreach. The media should develop public service announcements and other positive messages to build stronger families.

5. Community Health and Safety Networks and Schools should base community plans on research. They should use data from the Washington State Survey of Adolescent Health Behavior to identify risk and protective factors that should be addressed in planning local community safety programs and projects. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction should coordinate a partnership to establish and maintain a permanent research database on risk and protective factors of communities throughout the state. Local government planning policies should provide recreation areas in all neighborhoods, housing developments, parks and public places.

Youth Involvement

1. All Levels of Government should involve youth in decision-making, starting with schools and communities. This would help inform youth and help assure that programs and services reach those for whom they are intended.

2. Community Groups should create youth and adult partnerships to address real community issues. Partnerships should use success principles like sharing power and responsibility, simultaneous training, and joint youth/adult accountability. Partnerships should include a cross-section of youth and adults, operate on neutral common ground, and develop from a small to a larger scale.

3. Schools and Communities should provide suggestion boxes and phone lines for students, teachers, counselors, coaches and others to provide suggestions or share information on youth-driven activities that foster connectedness.

4. Older Students and the Business Community should serve as mentors for youth, through schools, community centers, and businesses. Chambers of Commerce, senior citizen groups, and other associations could provide opportunities for mentoring.

5. School and Community Activities should be inclusive, so that everyone can be involved in the life of the community.

Community and School Support Structures

1. Schools should provide space in school buildings for non-school programs that serve youth. State law should be amended to limit school district liability when these groups use school facilities.

2. Families, Schools, and Community Groups Serving Youth should emphasize social skills development from birth to age 18.

achievement."

—Governor Gary Locke
Youth Safety Summit Remarks
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*"We want things that have
the power to work. We don't
have time to fool around."*

—Superintendent Terry Bergeson
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3. **School Boards and Local Government** should include positions for youth representatives.
4. **Working Hours for Youth** should be regulated locally.
5. **Schools and Communities** should find ways to reduce "red tape," promote collaboration of frontline workers, and solicit views and ideas of frontline staff.
6. **Laws and Policies** should be modified so that information about at-risk youth can be shared among schools, agencies, service providers, and others with legitimate needs.
7. **Tribal Governments** should be included in collaborative youth safety efforts.
8. **State and Local Governments** should provide consistent funding to address and implement new alternative education programs for at-risk youth.
9. **The Legislature** should re-examine the "Becca Bill," relating to truancy and at-risk youth.
10. **Youth Programs** should be implemented so that youth take more ownership in their schools and communities.
11. **Every School** that wants a law enforcement or security officer on the premises should be able to get one.
12. **Priority Funding for Youth Programs** should go to programs serving culturally diverse populations.

School Safety and Security

1. **The Governor, Legislature, and Superintendent** should expand the basic education formula for state funding to include school safety and security.
2. **The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction** should coordinate with police, schools, attorneys, and others to develop and recommend standards for training school security personnel. School districts should be required to adopt these standards. The Office of the Superintendent should study possible legislative remedies to address inequities in enforcing discipline policy, as it applies to special education students.
3. **The Legislature** should adequately fund effective school safety proposals, including those addressing children with special needs. It should equalize funding to urban and rural schools and implement consistent, effective safety plans.
4. **School Districts** should assure that security policies and procedures are equitable and sensitive to civil and human rights, and to cultural differences. All stakeholders should be involved in developing school security policies in consultation with legal advisors. Procedures should include a clear appeal process.

"Providing safe schools and safe neighborhoods is a community responsibility."

—Superintendent Terry Bergeson
Youth Safety Summit Remarks August 19, 1998

"We also have the power to shape the culture around us. It matters what and which television programs we choose to see and watch and which we let our children see and watch."

—Governor Gary Locke
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5. **School Security Training** should be based on mutual respect between students and adults. Training should be readily available and accessible, be provided on an equal basis with pay for staff, include adult and student involvement, and reflect communication among school board, administrators, law enforcement, students, and community.

6. **School Districts, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the Legislature** should provide school security training to staff and students, including prevention, intervention, and crisis management. This will require federal, state, and local funds. A website should be established listing available programs and options.

7. **Students** should not have access to weapons. School/home partnerships can help to address student access, including gun control legislation, safety plans, anonymous reporting systems, and mandatory reporting.

8. **Adults** should provide opportunities for youth to bond with them through mentoring, tutoring, job shadowing, internships, and other volunteer activities. They should devote quality time before, during, and after school—and during summer breaks—for this purpose.

9. **Law Enforcement Agencies** should engage in partnerships with schools to ensure consistent enforcement of community standards. Examples include Law Days, restorative justice programs, school resource officers, and DARE, which can create a positive image for law enforcement.

10. **Community Agencies** should partner with schools through programs like Docs & Cops, DARE, and Trauma Nurses Talk Tough. Medical and law enforcement professionals should visit schools to provide programs on the real effects of violence, including videos and sharing real-life experiences with students in an age-appropriate manner.

11. **Communities** should establish school safety coalitions to develop community behavior standards, which should be consistently enforced. These coalitions should include all stakeholders, provide training, foster community dialogue with media, use media to convey the standards, and collect data for feedback. These coalitions should have strong local identification and community partnerships with youth as partners.

Media Roles and Responsibilities

1. **More Positive News Stories** should be promoted and encouraged. Professional journalism organizations should identify, celebrate, and recognize model media practices. The Governor should encourage citizens and groups to contact editorial boards and station managers about the need to balance negative stories with positive ones, such as highlighting local heroes. To avoid minority stereotyping and broad generalizations, the Governor should urge the Associated Press to revise its style book for a common terminology in references to race.

2. **School Curriculum** should include media literacy in language arts programs and social studies to foster critical thinking.

3. **Consumer Advocates, Communities, Legislators, and Businesses** should embark on a statewide consumer education campaign

directed at parents and youth on how some entertainment engenders violence in young people. A screening board should be established to rate video games for appropriate ages. Commercials should be screened for violence, destructiveness, and the use of intimidation to resolve conflict.

4. News Media and the Governor should convene a summit to discuss coverage of violence and create an ongoing dialogue. The public, publishers, reporters, editors, and station managers should be invited. Participants should create the goals and objectives. One outcome might be a media ethics panel, including media experts and others. Professional media groups and journalism schools should provide training for crime reporters. Experts in juvenile justice, social services, and other fields should teach reporters how the justice system functions. Training costs should be absorbed by the reporter's organization. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction should establish a website on youth safety and violence prevention. It should include a clearinghouse on programs that work throughout the state, with links to other websites on youth safety, domestic violence prevention, media sites, and schools. Media should be encouraged to include the big picture context and background when reporting violence. The Governor should encourage news media to make youth safety and violence prevention a priority in his personal visits throughout the state.

5. Entertainment Media should reduce the portrayal of violence, drugs, alcohol, sex, and the use of intimidation to resolve conflicts. However, censorship should not be imposed.